

Message Text

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SUBJECT:PRESS BRIEFING EXCERPTS

THE FOLLOWING Q & A'S ON ETHIOPIA HAVE BEEN EXCERPTED FROM
THE DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING THE WEEK OF APRIL 25.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ON THE U.S. SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA?
WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE OF U.S.-ETHIOPIA RELATIONS?

A: THE CURRENT STATE OF THE U.S. -- WELL, IT IS NO SECRET
THAT OUR RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA HAVE DETERIORATED OVER THE
PAST TWO YEARS, DESPITE OUR EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN OUR FORMER
CLOSE TIES. THE EXPULSION OF AMERICAN PERSONNEL BY THE
ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT CONFIRMS A DOWNWARD DRIFT IN OUR
RELATIONS WHICH WE NATURALLY REGRET. WE HOPE THAT THIS
TREND CAN BE ARRESTED.

A SMOOTH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXPULSION ORDERS WILL FACILI-
TATE THE RETURN TO A MORE NORMAL RELATIONSHIP.

Q: WHAT WILL THAT LEAVE YOU WITH?
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PAGE 02 STATE 097515

A: WELL, IT LEAVES US WITH THE EMBASSY.

WE HAVE 326 FOLK LEAVING, AND THIS IS SUBJECT TO SOME MINOR
REFINEMENT, I UNDERSTAND

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING THERE ON WHAT THAT LEAVES IN TERMS
OF ON-GOING U.S.-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONSHIPS, FINANCIAL OR
OTHERWISE?

A: WELL, WE HAVE A NUMBER OF PROGRAMS, WHICH I CAN GIVE

YOU, AS TO WHERE THEY ARE RIGHT NOW. THEY ARE A LITTLE LESS PRECISE. BUT, IN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR FISCAL YEAR '77, THERE IS 12.1 MILLION DOLLARS IN ASSISTANCE, AND 6.5 MILLION DOLLARS IN FOOD, PL 480, FOR A TOTAL OF 18.6 MILLION DOLLARS.

Q: DOES THAT HAVE MILITARY?

A: YES.

Q: WHAT IS THE FIGURE?

A: WELL, ALL RIGHT. FMS CREDITS AND GUARANTEES FOR FISCAL '76, NOTHING. ESTIMATED FISCAL YEAR 1977 ON DIRECT CREDIT, AND THESE ARE DOLLARS IN THOUSANDS, SO THIS WILL BE 10 MILLION DOLLARS. AND PROPOSED FISCAL 1978, 10 MILLION DOLLARS.

Q: THE SAME AMOUNT?

A: YES. BUT THAT, OF COURSE, IS AN OLD ONE.

Q: BECAUSE, I MEAN, ETHIOPIA IS ONE OF THE THREE COUNTRIES THAT THE SECRETARY MENTIONED ONCE ABOUT REDUCING MILITARY AID.

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PAGE 03 STATE 097515

A: THAT IS RIGHT. THIS IS AN OLD PROPOSAL, AND I DON'T KNOW WHERE IT STANDS. WHAT BOOK WAS THIS TAKEN OUT OF?

MR. PERENYI: THE PRESENTATION DOCUMENT SENT UP TO CONGRESS.

A: EARLY ON?

MR. PERENYI: YES.

A: SO, I DON'T KNOW WHAT REVISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE IN THIS. I WOULD TREAT A LOT OF THESE FIGURES AS BEING SOMEWHAT SHAKY. THEY COME OUT OF OLD PRESENTATIONS.

Q: CAN YOU GET US NEW FIGURES?

A: YES, SURE, I WILL, AS SOON AS I GET THEM. I AM GIVING YOU WHAT I HAVE GOT NOW, WHICH IS THE BEST I HAVE GOT.

Q: WHAT DO YOU HAVE ON -- WHAT PERSONNEL ARE AT KAGNEW?
.T KAGNEW, WE HAVE HAD A TOTAL OF 42 PEOPLE, INCLUDING FOUR DEPENDENTS. OF THOSE, 12 WERE MILITARY AND 26 WERE CIVILIAN.

Q: WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO THAT INSTALLATION, DO YOU KNOW?

A: WELL, NO, I DON'T KNOW WHAT IN THE LONG TERM IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO IT. THE ETHIOPIANS ARE GUARDING THE KAGNEW INSTALLATIONS RIGHT NOW.

Q: THEY ARE GUARDING IT, AND THESE PERSONNEL ARE GOING TO LEAVE?

A: YES.

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 097515

Q: AND THAT WILL LEAVE KAGNEW IN ETHIOPIAN HANDS, PRESUMABLY.

A: WELL, I DON'T KNOW WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING THERE ON THE SIZE OF KAGNEW?

A: NO.

Q: MONEY, ACREAGE?

A: NO, I SURE DON'T, MURREY.

Q: HODDING, CAN YOU CLARIFY EXACTLY -- WHEN THE SECRETARY IN FEBRUARY, I THINK, SAID THAT THE U.S. WAS CUTTING AID TO ETHIOPIA, MILITARY AID, EXACTLY WHICH MILITARY AID WAS BEING CUT AND FOR WHAT REASONS? HE CITED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AS A MAJOR REASON, BUT ONE READS THAT THE KAGNEW BASE WAS GOING TO BE -- THE KAGNEW COMMUNICATIONS STATION WAS GOING TO BE CLOSED DOWN ANYWAY.

A: YES, WE HAD INTENDED TO CLOSE THE KAGNEW STATION AND INFORMED THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT THAT BECAUSE OF TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS, KAGNEW WAS NO LONGER NEEDED, AND THAT WE WOULD THEREFORE LIKE TO ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS AS CALLED FOR IN THE INTER-GOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT GOVERNING KAGNEW FOR ITS CLOSURE BEFORE SEPTEMBER OF 1977.

Q: WHEN WAS THAT? WHEN WAS THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA INFORMED OF THAT?

A: I DON'T HAVE THAT. I WILL SEE IF I CAN GET IT.

Q: COULD YOU REPEAT THAT WORDING? DID YOU SAY IT WOULD BE CLOSED BY SEPTEMBER, OR WE WANTED TO DISCUSS IT BY SEPTEMBER?

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 05 STATE 097515

A: WE WANTED TO CLOSE IT. I WOULD LIKE TO READ IT EXACTLY. WE INFORMED THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT THAT KAGNEW STATION WAS NO LONGER NEEDED, THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS FOR ITS CLOSURE BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1977.

Q: THAT REFERS TO THE CLOSURE, NOT THE DATE OF THE DISCUSSIONS.

A: I WOULD HAVE TO READ IT THAT WAY.

Q: HODDING, DID YOU PAY RENT FOR KAGNEW?

A: I DON'T KNOW. I WILL FIND OUT. RENT FOR KAGNEW. (SPOKESMAN LATER SUPPLIED FIGURE OF 70,000 THOUSAND DOLLARS ANNUAL RENT).

Q: DOES THAT LEAVE ANY OTHER U.S. INSTALLATIONS IN ETHIOPIA? BESIDES THE EMBASSY -- TRACKING STATIONS, ANYTHING ELSE?

A: I DON'T KNOW OF ANY. IF THAT ANSWER IS WRONG, I WILL TELL YOU RIGHT AFTERWARD.

Q: HODDING, ARE WE GOING TO MOVE AGAINST ANY ETHIOPIAN FACILITIES HERE IN THE U.S. IN RETALIATION?

A: I KNOW OF NO PLANS.

Q: HAVE THEY INFORMED US THAT THEY INTEND TO CLOSE ANYTHING DOWN IN THIS COUNTRY?

A: I KNOW OF NO SUCH INFORMATION.

Q: HODDING, I JUST READ OVER THE LAST PARAGRAPH OF THAT STATEMENT. IT READS, "SMOOTH IMPLEMENTATION OF EXPULSION ORDERS WILL FACILITATE THE RETURN TO A MORE NORMAL RELATIONSHIP."
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 06 STATE 097515

TIONSHIP." AND I REALIZE I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT MEANS.

A: IT MEANS THAT WHILE THEY CLEARLY HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASK US TO DO WHAT THEY WISH IN THEIR TERRITORY, WE HAD HOPED, AND NOW HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE, WE WILL BE GIVEN AN ADEQUATE AMOUNT OF TIME TO GET OUR PERSONNEL AND MATERIAL OUT OF ETHIOPIA. AND WE HAVE NOW BEEN INFORMED BY THE

ETHIOPIAN AUTHORITIES THAT TIME WILL NOT BE A PROBLEM, WHICH I THINK WOULD GO TO WHAT THAT STATEMENT IS REALLY TALKING ABOUT.

Q: HODDING, DO YOU REGARD THIS AS A PURELY ETHIOPIAN-U.S. PROBLEM, IN VIEW OF THE ACTION TAKEN AGAINST SOME OTHER

COUNTRIES AND THE EXPULSION OF OTHER NATIONAL CORRESPONDENTS TODAY? IT SEEMS TO BE BROADER THAN SIMPLY A FEUD BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND ADDIS. IS YOUR READING OF IT AS A PURELY BILATERAL PROBLEM?

A: I DON'T THINK WE COULD REALLY COMMENT ON ETHIOPIAN ACTIONS ABOUT OTHER NATIONALS OR OTHER NATIONAL INSTALLATIONS. I WOULD HESITATE TO GET INTO THAT. I THINK WE WERE BY FAR THE MOST SEVERELY AFFECTED.

Q: YOU REFERRED TO GETTING OUR PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT OUT. YOU ALSO REFERRED EARLIER TO KAGNEW NOW BEING GUARDED BY ETHIOPIAN TROOPS. DOES THIS MEAN THAT WE ARE NOT GOING TO BE FREE, MAYBE, TO TAKE OUT THE ELECTRICAL, THE RADIO, THE RADAR, WHATEVER EQUIPMENT THERE IS AT KAGNEW?

A: IT IS OUR INTENTION TO WITHDRAW OUR MILITARY PERSONNEL, INCLUDING CONTRACT PERSONNEL, AND EQUIPMENT.

Q: SO, WE WON'T LEAVE A LISTENING STATION OR A RELAY STATION OR ANYTHING THERE FOR THEM TO OPERATE?
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 07 STATE 097515

A: I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT, TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, HENRY, AS TO WHETHER WE'RE GOING TO LEAVE A FACILITY IN PLACE. I JUST COULDN'T SPECULATE ON THAT.

Q: IF WE TAKE EQUIPMENT, IT SOUNDS LIKE --

A: YES, WELL, IT WOULD FOLLOW, I SUPPOSE; BUT AGAIN, I REALLY COULDN'T SPECULATE ON WHAT ARRANGEMENTS MIGHT BE MADE FOR FACILITIES WHICH ARE NOT MOVABLE.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THEY MIGHT RESIST THE WITHDRAWAL OF THAT EQUIPMENT?

A: I HAVE NOTHING TO INDICATE THAT THEY ARE GOING TO RESIST THE ORDERLY WITHDRAWAL OF PEOPLE AND MATERIAL.

Q: HODDING, YOU WERE ASKED EARLIER ABOUT RENT FOR KAGNEW. IF I RECALL PREVIOUS TESTIMONY SEVERAL YEARS AGO UP ON THE HILL, IN EFFECT THE U.S. MILITARY AID TO KAGNEW WAS COUNTED AS A RENT -- U.S. MILITARY AID TO ETHIOPIA WAS IN FACT A RENT FOR KAGNEW.

A: I'M READING ALONG OUR STATEMENT ON ETHIOPIA AND I SIMPLY DON'T SEE IT IN THERE, MURREY. THIS IS OUR OLD REPORT STATEMENT AND I DON'T SEE HOW THE ARRANGEMENT WAS WORKED OUT.

Q: IF I MAY CLARIFY MY QUESTION ON RENT. I'M NOT SO INTERESTED IN WHETHER IT WAS RENT OR NOT, BUT WHETHER THE

CLOSURE OF KAGNEW WOULD DEPRIVE THE ETHIOPIANS FROM SOME BENEFIT FROM US THAT THEY NOW RECEIVE, WHETHER IT IS RENT OR SOME OTHER FORM OF PAYMENT.

A: ALL RIGHT. I'LL GET AN ANSWER TO THAT ONE.

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 08 STATE 097515

Q: AND CONNECTED WITH THAT IS WHETHER THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, THE GRANT PROGRAM, WAS CONNECTED WITH THAT?

A: WELL, THAT WAS TERMINATED FOR FISCAL '77.

Q: RIGHT. BUT WHETHER THAT WAS CONNECTED WITH KAGNEW, IN FACT -- BECAUSE IN ONE OF THE REPORTS IT SAY THAT THIS IS WHY THE MAP WAS BEING TERMINATED.

A: THE REPORT SAYS, "FOR FISCAL YEAR 1978, WE ARE REQUESTING MAP FUNDS ONLY TO PAY FOR THE DELIVERY OF EQUIPMENT FUNDED IN PREVIOUS YEARS. THE DECISION TO TERMINATE MAP WAS PARTIALLY BASED ON THAT JUDGMENT THAT KAGNEW WAS NOW OF MARGINAL IMPORTANCE TO OUR COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK."

THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT? THAT'S THE ONLY REFERENCE I SEE, UNFORTUNATELY.

Q: I BELIEVE THERE WAS A SHARING ARRANGEMENT WITH THE INFORMATION FROM KAGNEW, SHARING THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT.

A: I WILL GET THAT FOR YOU. I JUST DON'T HAVE IT.

MR. PERENYI: HODDING, IN THE SECOND PARAGRAPH ON THAT GENERAL INFORMATION, THERE IS A REFERENCE TO THE MAP AND THE RELATIONS TO KAGNEW. IN THE CONGRESSIONAL PRESENTATION DOCUMENT, WHICH WAS, BY THE WAY, SENT DOWN EARLIER, IN THIS ADMINISTRATION, IT SAYS THAT IN 1953, THE U.S. INITIATED A GRANT OF MILITARY MATERIEL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, THE MAP, WHICH WAS DESIGNED TO HELP BUILD UP THE ETHIOPIAN ARMED FORCES, WHICH WERE THEN ENGAGED IN THE KOREAN WAR, AS A STABILIZING INFLUENCE IN THE HORN OF AFRICA, BUT GOES ON IN A TACIT QUID PRO QUO, "THIS PROGRAM PERMITTED THE UNITED STATES TO MAINTAIN ITS OPERATION OF THE IMPORTANT COMMUNICATION STATION AT KAGNEW."

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 09 STATE 097515

Q: THAT GOES BACK TO THE QUESTION I RAISED EARLIER. WHEN SECRETARY VANCE ANNOUNCED THE REDUCTION OF U.S. MILITARY AID TO ETHIOPIA, I ASSUMED THAT THE CUT IN THE MILITARY GRANTS WAS AN EXAMPLE OF IT, AND YET IF THE MILITARY

GRANTS WERE A QUID PRO QUO FOR THE USE OF KAGNEW, AND KAGNEW WAS BEING CLOSED DOWN ANYWAY, THEN WHAT EXACTLY WAS BEING CUT BACK BECAUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS?

A: WELL, THE MONEY.

Q: NO. BUT AS I SAY, THE MONEY, 6 MILLION DOLLARS IN GRANTS, SEEMED TO RELATE MORE TO THE USE OF KAGNEW, WHICH WAS BEING CLOSED DOWN ANYWAY.

A: WELL, WHAT IT SAYS -- AND I HAVE NEITHER THE BACKGROUND NOR THE WISDOM TO GO BEYOND IT -- IS THAT THE GRANT MATERIEL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WAS DESIGNED TO HELP BUILD UP THE ETHIOPIAN ARMED FORCES. AND THEN, AS A TACIT QUID PRO QUO, "THIS PROGRAM PERMITTED US TO MAINTAIN ITS OPERATION OF THE STATION." BUT I MEAN THE BUILD-UP OF MILITARY ARMED FORCES WOULD CONTINUE AS AN OBJECTIVE OF THE MILITARY PROGRAM, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. I MEAN JUST TO GO TO YOUR QUESTION. NOW, WHETHER THE FACT THAT WE WANTED TO THEN AT SOME POINT SOON CUT DOWN ON KAGNEW WAS A FACTOR, I CAN REALLY ONLY GO WITH WHAT THE SECRETARY SAID IN ANNOUNCING WHY WE CUT BACK IN MAP.

Q: CAN WE GO BACK TO CUBA?

A: YES.

Q: HODDING, CAN I FINISH ONE MORE ON THIS POINT PLEASE? DID I MISS IT BY COMING IN LATE, OR DID YOU SPECIFY WHEN WE FIRST INFORMED THE ETHIOPIANS THAT WE NO LONGER NEEDED KAGNEW?

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 10 STATE 097515

A: NO. I WAS LOOKING ALL THE WAY THROUGH IT, AND I DIDN'T HAVE IT, AND I'M GOING TO GET IT FOR YOU --

Q: ONE OTHER QUESTION: IS THERE AN AMERICAN POSITION ON THE ERITREAN CECESSIONIST MOVEMENT? DOES THE UNITED STATES TAKE THE ATTITUDE, AS IT DOES TOWARD ZAIRE, THAT IT BELIEVES IN THE INTEGRITY OF ETHIOPIA AND OPPOSES ANY MOVEMENT WHICH WANTS TO BREAK UP ETHIOPIA?

A: I WILL HAVE TO TAKE THAT QUESTION.

Q: THE DEPARTMENT THIS MORNING SAID THAT ETHIOPIA WAS INFORMED ON FRIDAY ABOUT THE DECISION TO CLOSE KAGNEW AND 24 HOURS LATER THE ORDER CAME OUT EXPELLING THE AMERICANS.

DO YOU SEE ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN THOSE TWO?

A: I WOULDN'T WANT TO SPECULATE ON CONNECTIONS. I HAVE

NOTHING ON CONNECTIONS WHATSOEVER TO OFFER YOU.

Q: HAVE THEY ANSWERED ON THE PROPOSAL TO CLOSE THE BASE?
IT'S CLOSED NOW ANYWAY.

A: WELL, I THINK THE DISCUSSION WOULD BE MOOT.
CHRISTOPHER

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